

I. NEOPAGAN SYMBOLISM

Today's lecture has two purposes. First, we will deal with the legends, meta-legends, and conventions that form the basis for most Neopagan ritual. Then we will discuss the purposes behind a witchcraft initiation, and walk through the one that the graduates of this class will perform.

A. Theology/Thealogy

Theology and thealogy (the alpha-ending, Thea, being the Greek feminine ending) are outlined to show how Neopagans relate to their own and other people's choices of gods. The hook on which this will all be hung is that most of the Gods represent facets of human experience personified.

1. Forms of the God

Discuss the various types of masculine gods that appear in pagan and Neopagan myth: the Sun-child, the Horned Hunter, the Sensitive Artist, and the Lord of Death.

2. Forms of the Goddess

Discuss the image of the Three-Fold Goddess: the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone.

B. The Wheel of the Year

Read aloud the story of the Wheel of the Year from THE SPIRAL DANCE, pages 28 and 29. Point out that this is the solar calendar, and relate it to the agricultural cycle. Then add the mystical component by telling the story of Persephone's descent into the underworld, showing how it relates to the Wheel.

C. Initiation

Tell the story of how Osiris was slain by his jealous brother, Set, and how his sister/wife Isis went down into the Underworld to gain the secret of resurrection from the dead (for reminders, use Wilson's account in COSMIC TRIGGER).

Discuss how Isis's humiliation in the land of the dead compares to the psychology of initiation (with a brief aside into Paul's revelation of Eleusis: "Except a seed of grain fall into the Earth and die, it cannot rise again"). Use this and the discussion from

Day One of how Craft Law arose to outline the dual purpose of a witchcraft initiation: to lead the initiate through humiliation

to

and death into elevation and new life, and to bind the initiate
the laws necessary for the group experience of the Craft.

Finally, if time permits, do a walk-through of the initiation to
familiarize the candidates with it, then give them their scripts
to memorize.